

THE HISTORICAL CONNECTION



A newsletter of the city of Las Vegas Planning & Development Department.

The Historic Preservation Commission is dedicated to saving the city's legacy and heritage.

Treasured Park Receives Historic Designation

by Courtney Mooney, historic preservation officer

The Las Vegas City Council added Floyd Lamb Park at Tule Springs to the city's historic register on Jan. 9, 2008. The historic park is located at 9200 Tule Springs Road in the Centennial Hills area of the city. The city's Historic Preservation Commission determined the historic ranch was eligible for designation based on its association with a significant phase of Nevada history (the divorce ranch era) and its integrity of architectural and environmental setting.

Tule Springs was originally named for the thick growth of tules, or cattails, that grew in the springs and ponds in the area. Because of the proximity to water, the location became a stop on the stage line connecting Las Vegas and the Bullfrog Mining District (near Beatty) in the early 1900s. John Herbert (Bert) Nay, the son of Mormon pioneers, first filed for water rights to the springs in 1916.

In the 1920s, the ranch became a headquarters for bootleggers until the repeal of Prohibition. The property was sold in 1941 to Prosper Jacob Goumond who expanded the ranch to 880 acres and raised cattle and alfalfa.

By 1949, the ranch was outfitted for paying guests, adding several features such as a foot bridge, fish pond, water wheel and swimming pool. Many of the guests were soon-to-be divorcees, spending the required six weeks in Nevada

until their divorces became final.

The city of Las Vegas purchased the ranch in 1964, and operated it as a city park under the name Tule Springs Park. It was sold to the state in 1977 and renamed Floyd Lamb State Park after the chair of the Nevada Senate's Finance Committee.

In July 2007, the city reacquired the park from the state after completing the Floyd Lamb Park Master Plan (available for viewing at www.lasvegasnevada.gov/Planning). A condition of transfer was that the park would retain the name of Floyd Lamb. The park was then renamed Floyd Lamb Park at Tule Springs to recognize its origins.

The historic district includes approximately 23 historic buildings and structures that were part of the day-to-day operations of the ranch including a pump house, foreman's house, adobe hut, stables and water tower. **HC**



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ISSUE

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Historic Preservation Project Honored at State of the City Address

Morelli House receives a Mayor's Urban Design Award



Left to Right: Stephanie Vogel, JLLV President 2007-2008, Mayor Oscar B. Goodman and Sherry Colquitt, JLLV Morelli House Project Manager.

Four Las Vegas projects were recognized as 2007 Mayor's Urban Design Award winners, including the Morelli House (featured in the Fall 2007 issue of this publication). The awards were presented during Mayor Oscar B. Goodman's State of the City Address on Jan. 8, 2008 at the Las Vegas Springs Preserve.

Referred to as the MUDA awards, projects are honored that cultivate walkways and streets as shared public spaces, promote walkability and safety, conserve resources and seamlessly link to their surroundings. This year a historic preservation category was added to recognize projects that safeguard the cultural history of Las Vegas.

The 2007 MUDA winners are:

Historic Preservation:	The Morelli House
Buildings and Their Environs:	Newport Lofts
Public Places:	Las Vegas Springs Preserve
Public Art:	Betty Willis (Lifetime Contribution to Las Vegas, iconic neon signage)

"All of these award winners exemplify the city's vision for leaving a sustaining footprint on the rich culture and quality of life of Las Vegas," Mayor Goodman said. "This is our second year to recognize quality design work within our city and we remain hopeful that others will also take their future projects to this level and higher." **HC**

Hands On Learning

by Raymond Aikens, historic preservation commissioner

I recently had the privilege of representing the city of Las Vegas at the 2007 National Trust for Historic Preservation Conference. A key topic of discussion at the conference directly affecting Las Vegas is "recent past" preservation. The standards and guidelines originally instituted by the National Park Service to designate properties as historic reflected the type of inventory, mostly in the eastern and midwestern states, from the late 1800s and early 1900s. The question is, do the rules created for classical historic properties apply to 1950s era properties?

The city of Las Vegas has been at the forefront of this discussion and local consultant, Diana Painter, was a presenter. Painter was hired by the Historic Preservation Commission to do a study of Berkeley Square, a 1950s era subdivision in the Westside. Recent carport conversions to garages may have been an impediment to designation. Painter's interpretation that the carports were originally designed to be convertible to garage space to keep home prices down was acceptable. As a result, Las Vegas has assisted many other modern communities in their efforts to document and qualify their "recent past" historic properties.

A tremendous success story was presented by the Historic Macon Foundation of Macon, Ga. The foundation started as a small group dedicated to revitalizing historic neighborhoods and breathing new life into the community. Their first major project centered on a historic but greatly rundown neighborhood surrounding Mercer University. A creative partnership was formed with the foundation and the university, enabling low-cost loans for university employees to purchase the restored homes. Within five years the neighborhood was reinvigorated and features beautiful yet affordable homes.

Instead of "reinventing the wheel," conferences allow participants to bring back ideas and recommendations to improve their community in a cost-sensitive, timely manner. Non-government preservation groups should be nurtured, providing the support they need in order to protect and impact our historic treasures. **HC**



Centennial Committee Funding

The board of the Las Vegas Centennial Committee recently approved funding \$69,074.19 for the "Voices of the Historic John S. Park Neighborhood Association: A Community Oral History Project." It also approved \$43,879 to Principium, a non-profit community revitalization organization, for improvements to the historic Westside school building, now the KCEP radio station.

Additionally, The Historic Preservation Commission approved a list of projects to be funded by a \$75,000 grant received from the Centennial Committee's board last year. The projects include research and documentation of historic neighborhoods and buildings, commissioner training, public outreach projects such as research for and production of educational brochures and historic markers, small grant awards and the annual historic preservation awards. **HC**

Preservation Update

U.S Post Office and Courthouse (1931)

Phase I of the Post Office restoration and adaptive reuse project is nearing completion. Many of the historic material in the building, including marble, wood, plaster and clay, have been covered and protected, or removed temporarily until construction is complete. The unreinforced masonry walls are being strengthened as part of the building's seismic retrofit, and any hazardous materials, such as asbestos, are being removed. Expected completion of this phase is summer 2008. The project has received funding from the city of Las Vegas Centennial Board, State of Nevada Historic Preservation Office and Commission for Cultural Affairs, federal grants, and most recently \$200,000 from the Las Vegas Convention and Visitor's Authority in February. The Post Office is listed on the local, state and national registers of historic places.



Fifth Street School (1936)

The Fifth Street School \$9.5 million rehabilitation and adaptive reuse project is near completion. The school suffered minor fire damage in November 2007 that



contributed to a delay in the opening. When it opens later this year, the building will be a cultural facility, housing the city of Las Vegas Office of Cultural Affairs, UNLV Downtown Design Center and the Las Vegas Chapter of American Institute of Architects. It will also feature a gym, gallery, courtyards and outdoor plaza space. The city of Las Vegas Office of Business Development will manage the facility.

Las Vegas Boulevard Scenic Byway

The city of Las Vegas is partnering with the Neon Museum Board on the preservation and placement of historic neon signs along Las Vegas Boulevard between Sahara and Washington avenues, designated a state scenic byway in 2001. The Federal Highway Administration awarded the city of Las Vegas a \$235,431 grant to restore two historic neon signs for the Las Vegas Boulevard median in December 2007. Two of the historic signs stored in the Neon Boneyard will be selected by the Neon Museum Board to be restored in the near future. Additionally, the Neon Museum's historic Horseshoe and Silver Slipper neon signs will soon be placed in their new home above Las Vegas Boulevard along the cultural corridor in downtown Las Vegas. The Las Vegas Centennial Committee approved \$420,000 in August 2007 to have these two signs restored and installed within the city's Cultural Corridor by April 2008. **HC**



Historic Preservation Month Mayor's Proclamation And Historic Preservation Awards Presentation

Las Vegas City Hall
Council Chambers,
400 E. Stewart Ave.,
Las Vegas, NV 89101
Wednesday, May 7, 2008
9:00 a.m.

Las Vegas News Bureau Historic Photo Exhibit

Bridge Gallery
(2nd Floor skywalk)
Las Vegas City Hall,
400 E. Stewart Ave.,
Las Vegas, NV 89101

Reception, May 16, 2008
3:00 - 5:00 p.m.

Exhibit through May 30, 2008

Southern Nevada Cultural History Fair

Springs Preserve
(Indoor Exhibit Area)
333 S. Valley View Blvd.,
Las Vegas, NV 89107
Saturday, May 17th
10:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.

Helldorado Parade

Fourth Street from Hoover Avenue
to Ogden Avenue
Saturday, May 17, 2008 7:00 p.m.
Visit the Helldorado Days Web site at
<http://www.elkselldorado.com/>



Biography Corner: Dorothy Wright

Dorothy Wright is the current vice-chair of the city of Las Vegas Historic Preservation Commission and has served on the board for

11 years. She is the program administrator in the Parks and Recreation Department of Clark County and is leading their 2009 Centennial Celebration efforts. Prior to joining the county, she worked for the Nevada Humanities Committee.

"I've been thrilled to see the city's list of his-

toric properties grow and the addition of our first city historic district," Wright said. "My official slot on the commission is as the member with expertise in history. As Vice-Chair, I only very rarely preside over meetings because our dedicated chairman, Bob Stoldal, almost never misses a meeting!"

Wright is currently serving on the board of the Las Vegas Neon Museum and chairs their facilities sub-committee which is building their new information center from the historic lobby of the former La Concha hotel on the Strip.

Wright is committed to her role in preserving Las Vegas' precious historic resources and educating residents about their contribution to the quality and fabric of everyone's daily lives. Nevada and local history buffs are familiar with Dorothy Wright's late husband, Frank Wright, a revered historian and fellow member of the city's Historic Preservation Commission. She has since remarried an old college friend and attorney, Richard Avila, who also volunteers with the Neon Museum. **HC**

Gone But Not Forgotten:

Lost/Saved/Threatened

by Courtney Mooney, historic preservation officer
and Dorothy Wright, vice-chair

Lost – 1015 – 1019 S. Casino Center Boulevard

This pair of apartment buildings was found eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places as contributing resources to the proposed Las Vegas Main Street Historic District. The report, completed in 2005 by Civic Visions, a historic preservation consulting firm from Pennsylvania, concluded that the buildings were, “an interesting contrast to the industrial modern (typical within the proposed district) with their references to Frank Lloyd Wright’s Suntop houses in the slightly projecting balconies and the overhanging roofs.” The buildings are being demolished as part of the Casino



The Historic Preservation Commission is an 11-member board made up of community members appointed by the Las Vegas City Council. The board is responsible for hearing and making recommendations regarding the designation of historic landmarks, properties and districts to the city's historic register; overseeing alterations and new construction of designated historic properties and making recommendations to the City Council. Meetings: 4th Wednesday of each month, 12:15 pm, 731 S. Fourth Street, Las Vegas, NV 89101 except in November and December which are typically held on the 3rd Wednesday of the month.

Bob Stoldal, chairperson
Dorothy Wright, vice-chairperson
Mary Hausch
Patrick J. Klenk
Robert Bellis
Janet Ruth White
Richard H. Cuppett
James Veltman
Raymond Aikens
Claytee White
Greg Seymour
David Millman, ex-officio

For more information about historic preservation efforts, contact:
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Center Realignment project which aligns Casino Center Boulevard with Third Street at Charleston Boulevard to make way for the ‘Downtown Connector’ Regional Fixed Guideway project.

Saved – Foremaster House

A Las Vegas historic treasure has been saved and adapted for re-use in the Las Vegas High School Historic District. Attorney Jan Paul Koch spent two years restoring the Mission Revival Foremaster house at 701 S. 7th Street for use as his firm’s law office. The house, built in the early 1930s, was the home of pioneer



Foremaster House circa late 1980’s – early 1990’s.

Las Vegas Lamar and Effie Foremaster for almost 70 years. Its majestic palm trees are as distinctive as the building’s red-tiled roof and Palladian windows. The original house underwent a major remodel in the early forties and an attached garage was added in the 1980s or early 1990s, yet the house retained a harmonious and pleasing balance. Working with a local architect, Koch remodeled the interior while leaving the exterior intact. One small section had to be completely rebuilt – a carport that had been enclosed as a family room. The foundation was re-poured to make it level with the rest of the structure. Unfortunately, a small cottage at 709 Garces dating from circa 1930 that was part of the property had to be demolished to create required parking spaces. The Foremaster house is one of the most important remaining visual anchors of the neighborhood and is listed as a contributing structure to the National Register Historic District.

Threatened – Huntridge Theatre (1944)

Designed by renowned architect S. Charles Lee, the Huntridge Theatre opened as a movie house in 1944. In recent years, the theater featured both film, live music and theater entertainment. As one of few surviving examples of Art Moderne theater architecture in the United States, the theater was placed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1993. The property has been closed since 2002, and has suffered damage from vandals and pigeon guano has damaged the interior of the iconic tower. Since the 1990s, the property has received over \$1 million in grant funding from the Nevada State Office of Cultural Affairs. If the current owners want to demolish the building, they would have to return this money to the state. Because the building is not listed on the local historic property register, the city of Las Vegas Historic Preservation Commission can’t prevent demolition. **HC**

Kudos:

Courtney Mooney was voted onto the board of directors for Preserve Nevada, a statewide nonprofit preservation organization, in February 2008. Its mission is to defend historical heritage through networking, educational outreach and heritage education, and the creation of vibrant communities through preservation incentives and advocacy. Preserve Nevada works in close partnership with the Public History Program at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas. **HC**